

Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative (Synopsis)

What Functions Should the Police Perform?

Determining the Role of the Police.

- Some argue that the police should not be involved in responding to non-criminal conduct.
- Some propose curtailing police activities that pose a risk of overreaction to minor offenses.

What role do the police currently play in your community?

- What are the primary activities of police officers in your community?
- Why are people calling 911?
- In what situations do police self-initiate interventions in the community?

Consider what grievances your community has had with its police force in the past and what you can learn from those instances.

- How often are complaints made about the police?
- Do particular units or assignments draw an outsized share of complaints?
- Do complaints come from a particular portion or portions of the community?
- What conduct is commonly complained about?

Should you deploy social service personnel instead of or in addition to police officers in some situations?

- Do you want police to respond to mental health calls?
- Do you want police to respond to substance abuse/overdose calls?
- Do you want police to respond to calls regarding the homeless?
- Are there other matters for which the community currently turns to its police for assistance that might be better addressed by others with different skills and expertise?

Can Your Community Reduce Violence More Effectively by Redeploying Resources from Policing to Other Programs?

Community Based Outreach and Violence Interruption:

- Community based outreach and violence interruption programs are derived from public health models of gun violence, that treat gun violence like a disease by identifying its causes and interrupting its transmission.

Parent Support Programs

Youth Development Programs

Addressing Trauma and Preventing Violence at Home

What function should 911 call centers play in your community?

It is important for communities to evaluate the functions of their 911 call centers as well as the roles and responsibilities of the individuals who serve as call-takers. Since 911 largely serves as the catalyst to police involvement in most instances, communities should consider how those calls are received, evaluated, and triaged for resolution to determine if any changes could be made to more effectively improve public safety.

Consider the following:

Who currently staffs your 911 call centers?

- Are all calls routed to law enforcement, fire, or EMS?
- Are there other social services that should be more fully integrated into 911 call centers and the triage process?
- Would call-takers need new training if your community wanted to shift response functions toward social services?
- Should 911 call centers be operated by law enforcement, other social service agencies, or a combination of agencies?

Should Law Enforcement Have a Presence in Schools?

- Schools districts often have agreements in place with their police department to station uniformed School Resource Officers (SROs) in their schools. School districts may employ SROs for a number of reasons, but most SRO programs are intended to increase the safety of schools and their students and teachers.
- Organizations like Fair and Just Prosecution argue that the presence of police in the schools results in student arrests and unnecessary contact between youth and the criminal justice system for what otherwise would be considered truancy or teenage misbehavior.
- If applicable, you should examine your community's use of SROs and determine if their deployment in schools best serves the needs of the students and reflects the needs and values of the community.

What are the Staffing Needs of the Police Department the Community Wants?

How Should the Police Engage in Crowd Control?

Employing Smart and Effective Policing Standards and Strategies

- Procedural Justice and Community Policing
- Specific policing strategies that have raised concerns among the public.
- Broken Windows” and “Stop and Frisk
- Discriminatory or Bias-Based Stops, Searches and Arrests
- Chokeholds and Other Restrictions on Breathing
- Pretextual Stops
- Informal Quotas for Summonses, Tickets or Arrests
- Use of SWAT Teams and No-Knock Warrants
- Less-Than-Lethal Weaponry such as Tasers and Pepper Spray

Law Enforcement Strategies to Reduce Racial Disparities and Build Trust

- Using Summonses Rather than Warrantless Arrests for Specified Offenses
- Diversion Programs
- Restorative Justice Programs
- Community-Based Outreach and Violence Interruption Programs
- Hot-Spot Policing and Focused Deterrence
- De-Escalation Strategies
- Can Your Community Effectively Identify, Investigate and Prosecute Hate Crimes?
- Community Engagement/ Community outreach plans
- Citizen advisory boards and committees
- Partnership with community organizations and faith communities
- Partnering with students and schools
- Police-community reconciliation
- Attention to Marginalized Communities

Fostering Community-Oriented Leadership, Culture and Accountability

- Is your leadership selection process designed to produce the police community relationship you want?
- Does your officer evaluation structure help advance your policing goals?
- What incentives does your department offer officers to advance policing goals?
- Does your hiring and promotion process help build an effective and diverse leadership team?
- What is your strategy to ensure that your department’s cultural-norms and informal processes reflect your formal rules and policies?

Tracking and Reviewing Use of Force and Identifying Misconduct

- When should officers be required to report use of force to their supervisor?
- What internal review is required after a use of force?
- Does your department review officers' use of force and/or misconduct during performance reviews?
- Does your department use external, independent reviewers to examine uses of force or misconduct?
- Does your department leverage Early Intervention Systems (EIS) to prevent problematic behavior?
- Does your department review "sentinel" or "near-miss" events? Does the department respond to questionable uses of force with non-punitive measures designed to improve officer performance?

Internal Accountability for Misconduct

- What does your department expect of officers who know of misconduct by another officer?
- Does your police department have clear procedures for reporting misconduct to the department and/or to outside agencies such as the Attorney General, the District Attorney, a civilian oversight agency or the EEOC? Are these procedures well understood by department personnel?
- Does your department have a clear and transparent process for investigating reports of misconduct?
- What procedures are in place to ensure that substantiated complaints of misconduct and settlements or adverse verdicts in lawsuits are used to reduce the risk of future misconduct?
- What controls are in place to ensure impartiality when reviewing potential misconduct or complaints? When appropriate, are cases referred to either the District Attorney or another prosecutor?
- Does your department expect leaders and officers to uphold the department's values and culture when off-duty?

Citizen Oversight and Other External Accountability

- Does or should your department have some form of civilian oversight over misconduct investigations or policy reform?
- Is there an easy, accessible and well-publicized process for members of the public to report complaints about police misconduct?
- Are investigation outcomes reported to the complainant? Are they reported to the public? Should the department or the citizen complaint review entity, if any, accept anonymous complaints?
- Does your local legislature engage in formal oversight of the police department? Should any changes be made in the legislature's oversight powers or responsibilities?
- Is your police department accredited by any external entity?

- Does Your Police Department Do an Annual Community Survey to Track Level of Trust?
- What police incident and complaint data should be collected? What data should be available to the public?
- How should your law enforcement agency leverage data to drive policing strategies?
- How can your police department demonstrate a commitment to transparency in its interactions with the public?
- How can your police department make its policies and procedures more transparent?
- How can your police department ensure adequate transparency in its use of automated systems and “high-risk” technologies?
- Should your police department leverage video cameras to ensure law enforcement accountability and increase transparency?

Recruiting and Supporting Excellent Personnel

- Recruiting a Diverse Workforce
- Does your agency reflect the diversity of the community it serves?
- What are ways in which your agency recruits diverse candidates that better represent the demographics of the communities you serve?
- What are ways in which you can re-evaluate hiring practices and testing to remove barriers in hiring underrepresented communities?
- How can you encourage youth in your community to pursue careers in law enforcement?
- What actions can your agency take to foster the continued development and retention of diverse officers?

Training and Continuing Education

- How can you develop officer training programs that reflect your community values and build trust between police officers and the communities they serve?
- What training policies can you adopt to ensure that police officers continuously receive high-quality, relevant in-service training sessions?
- How can leadership training improve community policing and strengthen relationships between your police department and members of the public?
- How can your police department use its training programs to avoid incidents involving unnecessary use of lethal or nonlethal force?
- How can your police department use its training programs to avoid potential bias incidents and build stronger connections with communities of color and vulnerable populations?
- How can your training program help officers effectively and safely respond to individuals experiencing mental health crises or struggling with substance abuse?
- What practices and procedures can you put in place to measure the quality and efficacy of your police department’s training programs?

Support Officer Wellness and Well-being

- What steps can you take to promote wellness and well-being within your department?
- Are there ways to address officer wellness and well-being through smarter scheduling?
- How can you effectively and proactively address the mental health challenges experienced by many police officers throughout their careers?
- How can you address the well-being of an officer after a traumatic event?